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MEXICO

by

JOSEPH WHARTON

PRIVATELY PRINTED
Christmas
1902

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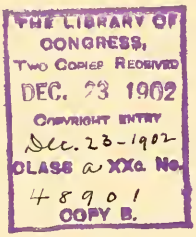

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MEXICO

I

Wilt thou have respite from this modern life
That wastes thy soul in trade's or fashion's strife?
Wilt thou cast off dull toil and paltry care,
In Nature's free magnificence to share?
Lov'st thou the tales of old, romantic times,
Of wild adventures in luxurious climes?
And soars thy eager fancy far away,
To reach some tropic Eden or Cathay,
Where thou in sunny happiness may'st range
'Mid scenes and peoples picturesquely strange?
Fond dreamer, pining thus, why hunger so?
Before thee lies mysterious Mexico.

LA VIGA CANAL AND CUSTOM-HOUSE

TROPICAL SCENERY, PROGRESO, YUCATAN

II

Vast, sun-dried table-lands, where dust-whirls rise
Like phantom serpents struggling to the skies;
Huge, barren mountains veined with precious ore,
Rich for past centuries, rich for ages more;
Broad, placid lakes where wildfowl feed and splash,
Superb ravines where plunging torrents dash,
Imperial peaks with gleaming snow-crest crowned,
The beacons of a hundred miles around;
Large, fertile regions stretching warm and wide
To meet the ocean bounds on either side;
Grandeur and loveliness in endless show;
Delicious air. All this is Mexico.

VALLEY OF PUEBLA, CHOLULA, FROM THE TOP OF THE AZTEC PYRAMID

RUINS AT ALVARADO

III

Pines on the mountain, palms upon the plain,
Abounding wealth of coffee, corn, and cane,
Cactus and yucca of quaint prickly forms,
Armed at all points, unheeding foes or storms;
Maguéy, whose serried ranks fill many a field,
That fiery mescal and smooth pulqué yield;
Gay birds and insects, countless fruits and flowers,
Bull-fights profaning the sweet Sabbath hours;
Ploughs made of wood, that feebly scratch the ground,
Wheat threshed on dirt by oxen trampling round;
Tortillas and frijolés. He will grow
Acquaint with these who visits Mexico.

STREET VIEW, CORDOVA, SHOWING PEAK OF ORIZABA

BULL FIGHT— ENTRANCE OF THE FIGHTERS

IV

White towns and cities that recall old Spain,
As if the Moor and Cid were come again,
By stony roads approached on every side,
Where mule trains toil and caballeros ride;
Tall stone cathedrals, huts of reeds and clay,
Like priests that rule 'mid humble folk that pay;
A crude republic, rogues and patriots blent
With the great mass, to both indifferent.
The soldier patient, rascally, and brave,
The peasant abject, but not quite a slave;
A furtive race, dark, superstitious, slow,
Skilled in old arts, is that of Mexico.

THE CATHEDRAL, CITY OF MEXICO

A NATIVE HUT BY THE WAY-SIDE, CORDOVA

V

Out from the towns, with their commingled strain
Of Spanish blood, these native men remain
The Indian tribes Hernando Cortés met,
Their ancient languages not perished yet,
Nor dim observance of old heathen rite,
Nor savage passion, deadly quick in fight;
Yet kindly aid to stranger guest is given,
And Mary trusted as the Queen of Heaven.
Knowing and having little, but content,
In daily toil their simple lives are spent.
A base content is this the gods bestow;
Meanly to live in glorious Mexico.

FARMER BOYS, ORIZABA

INDIAN BOYS, TOLUCA

VI

For, when in Mexico's barbaric day
Fierce king and host met king in bloody fray,
When captives, to the war-gods' temples led,
Were butchered by the priests, who on them fed,
Their grim idolatry's abhorrent blight
Blinded all eyes to reason's cheerful light;
And when the conquering Spanish bigots came,
Little recked they of mercy or of shame.
Ground by such cruel centuries of wrong,
What race was ever frankly true or strong?
This race, outlasting king and priest and foe,
Abides and waits, possessing Mexico.

NATIVES PLOUGHING WITH OXEN, LEON

CHURCH BUILT BY CORTÉS, CHOLULA

VII

Historic splendors have they of their own.
See the great Montezuma fill their throne,
Ruling, except small Tlaxcala, all the land
With the stern mastery of supreme command.
His foes subjected, and as vassals tied,
Empire and tribute his on every side,
From north to south, from coast to high plateau,
His will is law, his swift-foot runners go.
What though strange lords their race in bondage held
In after days! Were not those lords expelled?
Well may their past inspire a patriot glow
Of hope and faith for future Mexico.

STATUE OF QUANHTEMOC, CITY OF MEXICO

VIII

Meanwhile a deep and true content is theirs,
One that their highest with the humblest shares;
The sweet repose of home, the ties of kin,
With all the bliss that faithful love can win.
Does vice offend; what land from vice is clean?
No tongue defends it, for no plea can screen.
But see the countless homes where virtue reigns,
Where fond affection binds with silken chains;
Parents with children linked in sweet accord,
Friend true to friend, and spouse by spouse adored.
What purer happiness dwells here below,
Than in the sacred homes of Mexico?

ZACATECAS

NATIVE HUTS, JUANACATLAN

IX

And lo! A tint of dawn is in the sky,
That tells of fateful changes drawing nigh;
For even here the modern impulse stirs,
And here the truth has honest worshippers.
Not vainly does the nation's spirit wake,
Resolved a nobler course henceforth to take,
To share the great world's progress, and to stand
Erect beside our friendly neighboring land.
These men, who twice have burst their alien chain,
Must solve the easier problems that remain.
What affluent wealth and glory may they know,
When they are men to match their Mexico!

THE VALLEY OF MALTRATA

THE TERRACE, CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC

X

Need they a friendly ruler by their side,
The law's strong champion and his country's pride;
A chief courageous, temperate, and just,
On whom their hearts may lean with loyal trust;
One who will show them how in every land,
Nature's crude hoards yield to the skilful hand,
And how, with equal rights, each opening mind
May all the roads to power and increase find?

As rose our Washington, serenely great,
And patient Lincoln, saviour of the State;
Their native Juarez laid the usurper low,
Their Diaz guards and guides their Mexico.

BENITO JUAREZ
First President of Mexico

PORFIRIO DIAZ
President of Mexico

XI

Oh, land majestic! Apt for all delight,
Sweet womanly languors, and high deeds of man.
Lie prone no more beneath the palsying ban
Of crusted usage! On thy valleys dight
With tropic verdure, thy cold mountains' height,
And blissful slopes which temperate breezes fan,
Breathes the new air that through the ages ran
Whenever God turned men toward the light.
Does our proud race alone enjoy the sun,
Or does the rain make green no fields but ours?
Prophetic eyes but faintly have begun
To see the lofty climax of thy powers,
When the full noontide of thy day is won,
And gathering night on weary Europe lowers.

JOSEPH WHARTON

PHILADELPHIA, May, 1891

FALLS OF JUANACATLAN

VIEW OF PUEBLA, SHOWING MOUNT POPOCATEPETL

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